

App. No.: 09/844,965
Art Unit: 1744

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REMARKS

Applicants have received and reviewed an Office Action dated June 14, 2006. By way of response, Applicants have amended claims 1, 5-6, 8, 10, 18-20, 22-25, 29, 31, 36-39, 42, 45-47, 55-56, 58-59, 67, 70-72, and 75-76, and canceled without prejudice claims 9, 11-12, 14, 21, 41, and 44. Claims 1, 5-6, 8, 10, 18-20, 22-25, 31, 33, 36-40, 42-43, 45-47, 55-56, 58-60, 67-68, 70-72, and 75-76 are pending. No new matter is added. Applicants submit that the pending claims are supported by the specification.

For the reasons given below, Applicants submit that the amended claims are in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Claim Amendments

Applicants have amended claims 1, 5-6, 8, 10, 18-20, 22-25, 29, 31, 36-39, 42, 45-47, 55-56, 58-59, 67, 70-72, and 75-76 to correct antecedent basis.

Applicants have also amended claims 1, 5-6, 8, 10, 18-20, 22-25, 29, 31, 36-39, 42, 45-47, 55-56, 58-59, 67, 70-72, and 75-76 editorially, to more clearly recite the claimed invention.

Applicants have also amended claims 1, 10, 18, 24, 29, 36-39, 45-46, 55, 58-59, 67, and 70 to replace --object-- with recite " medical or dental instrument or device". This amendment finds support in the specification at least at page 2, lines 6-7, and page 6, lines 15-22.

Applicants have amended claim 6 to recite "the first station further comprises a second sonicator positioned on the exterior of the first station". This amendment finds supported in the specification at least at page 10, lines 9-10.

Applicants respectfully argue amended claims 1, 31, 42, 55, 67, and 76, and their dependents, are in condition for allowance, and notification to that affect is earnestly solicited.

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Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph

Claims 1, 5-6, 8-12, 18-20, 22-25, 29, 31-33, 36-47, 55-56, 58-60, 67-68, 70-72, and 75-76 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

This rejection is moot with regard to claims 9, 11-12, 14, 21, 32, 41, and 44 as these claims have been canceled.

Claim 1 and corresponding dependents have been amended to more correct antecedent basis with regard to the recitation "the objects". Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly recite the "sonicator" and the "liquid transporter" and the recitation directed to "emitter" has been deleted. Claim 1 has also been amended to remove parenthesis.

Claim 6 has been amended to recite "a second sonicator positioned on the exterior of the first station". This amendment finds supported in the specification at least at page 10, lines 9-10.

Claim 18 has been amended to correct antecedent basis with regard to "antimicrobial composition".

Claim 29 has been amended to recite "a conveyer adapted and configured to transport the medical or dental instrument or device through the first station and the dryer".

Claims 31, 43, 55, 67, and 76 have been amended to more clearly recite the claimed invention. In particular, dependent claims 31, 43, 55, 67, and 76 have been amended to remove elements already recited in the claims that claims 31, 43, 55, 67, and 76 already depend from.

Claim 55 has been amended to recite "a fourth station".

Claim 59 has been amended to recite "a fourth transporter". Claim 71 has been amended to recite "a fifth transporter".

Claim 36-39, 58, 70, and 75 have been amended editorially. Claims 42, 43, 56, and 68 have also been amended editorially.

Accordingly, these claims fully comply with 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1, 5-6, 8-12, 14, 18-25, 29, 31-33, 36-40, 42-43 and 45-47, 50-56, 58-60, 63-68, 70-72 and 75 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over *Boucher* (US 3,708,263 or US 3,837,805) in view of *DiGeronimo* (US 4,494,357) or *Ramachandran* (US 4,720,374).

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Claims 1, 5-6, 8-12, 14, 18-25, 29, 31-33, 36-40, 42-43 and 45-47, 50-56, 58-60, 63-68, 70-72 and 75 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over *Moyers* (US 6,090,213) in view of in view of *Aussenac* (GB 2,040,150) and any of *Halaka* (US 6,071,480) or *DiGeronimo* (US 4,494,357) or *Ramachandran* (US 4,720,374). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments to independent claim 1 overcome these rejections. Independent claim 1 is directed to a system for washing, disinfecting, or sterilizing a medical or dental instrument or device which includes a dryer adapted and configured to dry the medical or dental instrument or device in the presence of a chlorine dioxide sterilant. In particular, independent claim 1 further in recites the dryer includes a sterilant system in which the sterilant system includes an injector having a pressure release valve configured to add a chlorine dioxide sterilant to the dryer.

Boucher discloses drying the processed material in a sterile atmosphere. [See Abstract]. In particular, *Boucher* discloses drying at a temperature below 75 degrees C inside an ultraviolet tunnel. [See col. 3, ll. 36-37].

Moyers discloses a dry tank, in which a blower is connected and blows through a heater into the blow tank. [See col. 3, ll. 30-32].

Boucher and *Moyers* fail to teach or suggest a dryer adapted and configured to dry the medical or dental instrument or device in the presence of a chlorine dioxide sterilant. *Boucher* and *Moyers* also fail to teach or suggest a dryer including a sterilant system that includes an injector having a pressure release valve configured to add a chlorine dioxide sterilant to the dryer. *DiGeronimo*, *Ramachandran*, *Aussenac*, and *Halaka*, fail to remedy the short comings of *Boucher* and *Moyers*.

Accordingly, based on the foregoing differences, Applicants respectfully submit that these references neither teach nor suggest the presently claimed invention and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

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Conclusion

In summary, Applicant submits that each of claims 1, 5-6, 8, 10, 18-20, 22-25, 31, 33, 36-40, 42-43, 45-47, 55-56, 58-60, 67-68, 70-72, and 75-76 is in condition for allowance, and notification to that effect is earnestly solicited. The Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below, if the Examiner believes that doing so will expedite prosecution of this patent.

Respectfully submitted,

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